

A NEW
NARRATIVE
OF A

Fiery Apparition

Seen on several days about TOWER-HILL.

OR, A JUST
RELATION

Of the unjust Proceedings of

Mr. *Sherman*, Church-Warden of *All-hallows
Barkin, London.*

By JONATHAN SANDERS, Lecturer of the said
Church.

OF Late the Common Prints have made a great pother about an Image erected in the Parish-Church of *All-hallows Barkin, London*, which Image was indited at the last Sessions at the *Old Baily*. The upper Church-Warden without advice, and contrary to Order, was pleased to plead Guilty; how far he may be concerned in the Guilt I am not to enquire, but since the proceeding may have afforded matter of Scandal to some distant persons, I thought it was my duty to give some brief Account of the whole matter, which is as followeth.

On Sunday, *March* the Sixth, Mr. *Sherman* acquainted Dr. *Hicks*, and my Self, that there was an Inditement prefer'd at the *Old Baily* against the Church-Wardens for suffering an Image in the Church, not making any mention that the Doctor, or my Self, were concerned in the Inditement, though a Copy of it had been given him for that very purpose.

On Monday, the Seventh instant, Mr. *Sherman* took down from the East end of the Church the (pretended) Figure of the Archangel St. *Michael*,

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by

by the assistance of the Clerk and Sexton, against the advice of the Doctor, and without the Knowledge or Consent of the Vestry.

He carried it on the same day to the Sessions-house in the *Old-Bailly*, and did (singly) plead Guilty to the Inditement; of which the Court took so little Notice that they would not accept his Fine.

This (pretendedly) superstitious Image was brought back the same Night, continued in the Church all Tuesday, and conveyed thence on Wednesday. When Mr. *Sherman* being asked how he had disposed of the same, and by what order, he replied, That he had sent it to Mr. Sheriff *Bethel* by order of the Court.

On the Sunday following it was intended there should be a Vestry, which accordingly was called, in the Name of the Doctor, Mr. *Sherman* having given Order to the Clerk not to use the Name of the Church-Wardens.

After Sermon, the Vestry being Assembled, Mr. *Sherman* refused to take his place as Church-Warden, telling them that the Poor wanted no Money, and that if in any thing he wanted their advice, he would call them when he thought fit; adding withall, That the Doctor had no power to hold a Vestry without him, therefore he would not stay any longer, but told them (imperiously enough) that he dissolved them.

The Vestry, notwithstanding this huffe, sat and made some Orders, but they were no sooner broke up but Mr. *Sherman* returned to the Church from his own House with a part of (his God-son *St. Michael*) the Image, which with some vain-glory he burnt in the Vestry.

On the Sunday following he caused another part to be laid on the Fire before Evening-Prayer. And whereas he then burnt a Wing of the Angel, affirming, that neither the Pope nor *St. Peter* should have any piece of it; so after Sermon, before all the Gentlemen of the Vestry then present, he pull'd some part of the Feet of it out of his Pocket, telling them, That as it could not fly, so neither should it walk to *Rome*.

But the Poor innocent Figure could not escape thus, for on the Sunday following, viz. *March* the 27th. he brought some other pieces of it into the Vestry before Evening-Prayer, and burnt them in the presence of Mr. *Tomlyn*, one of the Vestry, who seriously asking him what he meant by so doing, Mr. *Sherman* replied, That he would not suffer any part of the Image to remain. All of these are most significant Expressions of zeal against *Poper*y.

This is clearly the state of the Affair as it hath been gradually carried on.

Now any one that hears of all this, together with the Confession of the guilty Church-Warden, might be induced to think there were some great matter at the bottom of such an Eminent proceeding.

Without doubt it hath made a great Noise not only in the City of *London*, but also in places more remote whither the News of it hath been industriously carried for the Example of all other Church-Wardens, who, by one of our *London* Scriblers of Sedition, are advised to tread in the Steps of this worthy Gentleman. People are hereby made to believe that *Poper*y is coming in apace among us, and that it must have its first entrance at *All-hallows Barkin*.

But to prevent any such mistake, it is requisite that they who take the trouble of reading this Paper would seriously consider these few necessary Additions that I am to make.

- I. This Image (as they call it) was not a thing erected of late, but set up

up in the Year 1658. or thereabout, and had no relation but to the Two Figures of *Death* and *Time*, betwixt which it might handsomly enough stand with its Trumpet and Motto, to mind Men of the last Judgment. It is strange that no body could discover either the thing it self, or the mischief of it, till 1680. But the Wise man tells us their is a Time for all things, and it is the good luck of our discerning Church-Warden to hit it.

II. This Figure was so far from having any respect or veneration paid to it, that few or none of the Inhabitants took any notice of it; and had the Doctor, or Lecturer, been asked Two or Three weeks before this bustle, where it stood, I dare confidently pronounce they had been to seek for an answer.

But this also was the happy discovery of the Church-Warden, who knew when it was fit to prefer an Inditement, and hath the good fortune to know the Critical Time of One Year in Ten, when a thing is done *prave mentis*, and when a Man bows to an Idol under the colour of adoring his God. Yet I must be so just to the Gentleman, as to protest that I don't think that in his own Conscience he believes that any of us had this Image under any religious Consideration; and if he fails here, as most disingeniously he doth, it is not to pass for a failure in his Understanding, but for a voluntary, a designed, and a malicious Prevarication.

'Tis possible he may please himself with the delightfull apprehension of gratifying some one party of men; but then he ought to remember, that he that sells his Neighbor's Fame for a little unsavory popular Breath, will in the conclusion gain nothing but Infamy and Disgrace.

Every sober Man will allow the liberty of saying this, when he may know that there is not a more serious and regularly-devout Parish in the City of *London* than this of *All-hallows Barkin* is: And when they shall be exposed to the censure of the World as Popishly-affected, 'tis not only an ill thing, but it is an ill sign; 'tis a token that some among us are either ignorantly, or cunningly, running into that *Popery* which they pretend to hate and fear.

This is the mighty Engine that carries on the business of the Jesuits, and other Papists at this time; for if men can at pleasure take away the reputation and honour of the Church of *England*, then the *Romish* Faction have gained the Field, and have no more to doe but to sit down and divide the Spoil. Yet so it is, we are fallen among a generation of things (whom I was going to call Men) which call every Man Papist, and every thing Popish, which doth not just jump with their little self-conceited Moddels. And this Course is so irrational and absurd, as well as irreligious, that I can see no reason for it, unless it be that these pretended Protestant-zealots carry on the same design with the Papists, and intend to share with them at last, as the late *Lambert* who aimed at the Protectorship, proves since to be a known Papist, as Mr. *Oats* informs us.

III. 'Tis pretended that this Figure was Condemned by the Court at the *Old Baily*: A suggestion as far from truth, as the God-father was from the right Name of his Child. It may seem strange that the Church-Warden should pretend an order of Court when there was none, and when Sir *George Treby* the Recorder declared, that the proceeding was not grounded upon any Law that he knew of.

Yet such is the insolence of some Men, that they dare lay their ill-favor'd

Brats at whose door they please. In the mean time the Ministers and Parishioners of *All-hallows Barkin* have this Comfort, That they are slandered and indited by none but those that have the Confidence to act by such Orders as they never received.

This I tender to the publick as an impartial Account of what hath passed since this business came upon the Stage ; I could have wished with all my heart that the thing had made no noise abroad, but since it hath taken air, I thought it requisite that the honest Apology should be as open as the unjust Slander.

I know how unhandsome it is to interrupt Men of business with little particular Concerns of our own, and I very well understand that Liberty of Conscience, and Liberty of the Press, are things that have an unhappy influence upon the Nation ; and therefore as I am no Friend (in the present wild Notion) to the one, so I should hardly have been Guilty of using the other, had there not been this too just occasion for it.

If this short Relation have not its wished effect in giving satisfaction to any that are honestly jealous, I shall give e're long a fuller Account, such as may clear us from any suspicion of *Poper*y that may lurk in any credulous and unwary Breast ; in the mean time here is

T H E E N D.